



**Department of Housing and Urban Development**

**Public Law 115-336**

***21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act***

**Progress Report**

**December 2020**

## **Department of Housing and Urban Development**

### **Progress to Implement the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act - 2020 Annual Report**

#### **Background**

Section 3(d) of the [21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act](#) (21st Century IDEA)<sup>1</sup> requires the head of each Federal executive branch agency to report annually (through 2023) to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the public on the agency's progress to implement the requirements of the Act, and modernize their websites and digital services. The information below details the efforts of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to modernize the agency's websites and digital services in 2020.

#### **HUD Efforts to Date**

HUD is leveraging 21st Century IDEA to streamline our digital footprint and create a better customer experience to our customers, partners, and the public.

In 2020, HUD established a Chief Digital Service Office to ensure alignment of digital service roadmap and to focus on customer experience on all aspects of HUD's digital transformation. In particular, the multi-year, \$91 million modernization project, FHA Catalyst, launched in December 2019. The FHA Catalyst leverages a low code/no code configuration utilizing Platform as a Service (PaaS) and Software as a Service (SaaS) paired with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to overhaul FHA's 40-year-old technology. The FHA Catalyst digitized loan, appraisal and insurance claim forms, and case binders into a web-based portal where lenders, loan servicers, mortgagees, and HUD personnel can conduct transactions, review cases, and check statuses. The project will consolidate 25+ legacy and cuff systems to a single platform, eliminating costly mainframe support and multiple operation and maintenance contracts while saving the Agency approximately \$20 million per year in technology costs alone. The resultant business process improvements through automation have transformed the way HUD interacts with citizens, partners, and the communities that it serves by creating efficient work processes, consolidating touchpoints, and ultimately improving the customer experience. The initiative is also projected to save FHA customers over \$200 million annually, and it enables advanced portfolio reporting and data analytics while meeting many requirements required under section 4 of the Act.

Starting in 2020, HUD has identified immediate and long-term actions the agency will take to modernize agency websites and the digital customer experience. Those efforts include updating HUD's IT Strategy to include customer experience and standards to align with the 21st Century IDEA Act. Currently HUD has made significant progress ensuring its primary, public facing website meets the majority of the eight specific requirements put forth in the Act of modernizing its website. The site is accessible, it has a consistent appearance, it is authoritative, it is searchable, it is secure, and it is mobile-friendly.

As a first step towards a more user-centered design that streamlines services, HUD launched a Customer Experience page where users can accomplish top tasks (as identified by site analytics) and learn more about HUD's customer-centered vision going forward including building new capabilities across contact centers, utilizing the cloud, leveraging data analytics, and focusing on customer experiences to help customers reach HUD and gain better access to our services.

---

<sup>1</sup> Public Law 115-336, 132 Stat. 5025-5028.

In addition, HUD has stood up an enterprise-wide Customer Experience Transformation Team (CXTT) that is chartered to improve the interactions of customers with HUD, digital and otherwise. The CXTT is building several capabilities that will improve digital experience:

- Redesigning website content around the needs of its customers, by researching their needs, designing prototypes, and testing those prototypes with customers to ensure the new digital experience meets their needs.
- Developing a strategy to conduct rigorous customer research to ensure program areas understand the current customer experience and customer needs so that any new digital experiences are based on addressing real customer problems.
- Developing training to ensure programs know how to deeply understand their customers' needs, design new experiences, and test those new experiences with their customers to ensure they address customer needs.
- Establishing a new Voice of the Customer practice that will enable program areas to collect and analyze customer data to efficiently pinpoint issues and identify meaningful solutions using human-centered design techniques.

In October of 2020, Federal Housing Administration (FHA) launched an FHA Resource Center IT Modernization project for an enterprise-wide, omnichannel, centralized, front-door contact center with an ecosystem of supporting infrastructure, technology, and organizational management that provides internal and external customers with timely, accurate, and consistent services. This new contact center will expand communication channel offerings to include live chat, SMS/MMS, AI chatbot, and Intelligent IVR. All communications channels will be integrated through a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform and tools to create a consistent and coordinated omnichannel experience for HUD customers. This HUDCentral Contact Center will be enabled through the creation of a new centralized, robust, continuously evolving CRM Knowledge Management (KM) solution that consolidates existing knowledge at HUD.

HUD began an effort to pilot website and application development, leveraging the U.S. Web Design System on the HUD's Cares Act Reporting portal to offer a more consistent user experience across HUD and its user community. HUD also began developing an enterprise-wide information architecture and content management, to improve the accessibility of digital content and services, as well as, raised agency-wide awareness of the guidelines on the use of the U.S. Web Design System.

HUD also conducted inventory and upgraded on secure connection for websites and applications, to ensure compliance with industry standard. HUD promoted and encouraged participation in the Federal Digital Analytics Program (DAP) to increase the use of performance metrics, and to better understand customer experience and areas of continuous improvement. Regular DAP training has been provided on a rolling basis.

Finally, as required by section 7 of the Act, HUD will continue to make progress on leveraging shared services, where practicable, to streamline HUD's digital transformation, to increase its interoperability within itself and among other partner agencies on open data, website standards, and best practices.